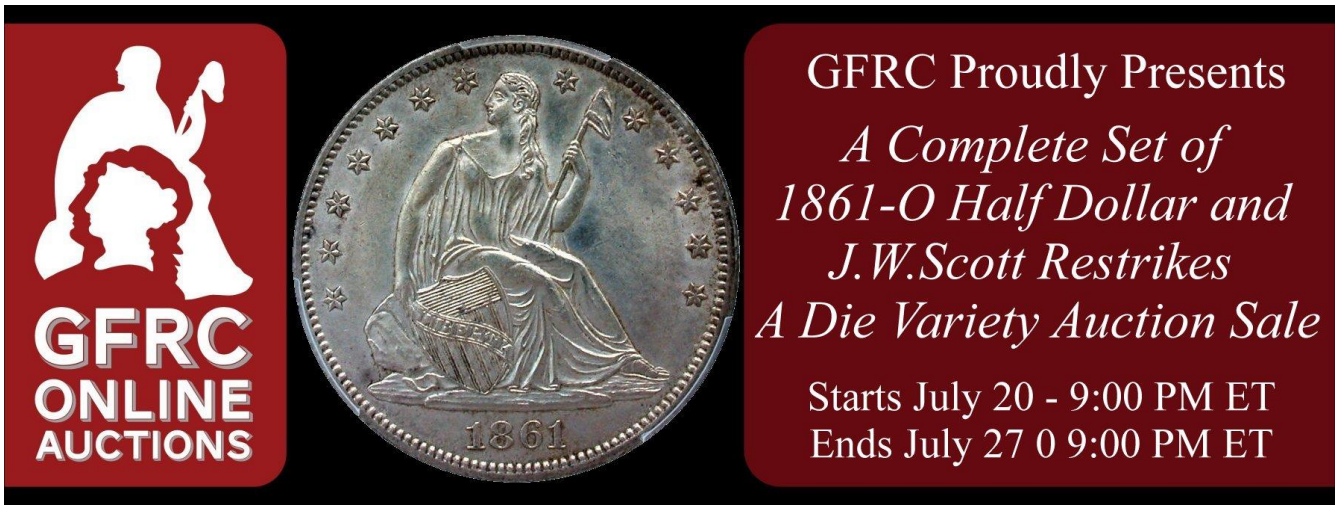
The 1861-O Half Dollar and J.W.Scott Restrikes

A Die Variety Auction Sale

July 20, 2024 – July 27, 2024



Welcome to the 4th auction event of 2024! GFRC is excited to be offering a complete set of 1861-O Liberty Seated half dollar varieties along with three J.W.Scott restrikes. Our consignor has spent years assembling this important die variety reference set from the tumultuous initial Civil War year when the New Orleans mint saw three different administrations prior to being shuttered during May 1861. Also highlighting this sale are three Scott Restrikes, the first a gem CSA Scott Restrike along with two CSA Restrikes, one accomplished on a Bisected Date host coin.

Auction sale highlights include:

- 20 Lots Totaling Nearly $90,000 in Auction Reserves
- A Condition Census 1861-O Union W-2 Specimen
- Premium Examples of the Louisiana W-5 and W-6 Die Pairings
- A Notable CSA Obverse "W-11" with Bold Die Diagnostics

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Please watch for a huge GFRC Online Auctions Event during early 2025!

The Gerry Fortin Liberty Seated Collection Sale

And

The Newtown Liberty Seated Half Dollar Collection Sale

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1861 CSA Scott Restrike, PCGS MS64 CAC, Gem Original. One of the initially struck 500 pieces by J.W. Scott in white metal to test the reconditioned Confederate half dollar reverse die and extremely well preserved. The GFRC-Gem rated specimen is flawless with the surfaces providing an intricate view of the rusted condition of the Confederate reverse circa 1879. Under a bright light, both sides are partially mirrored with eye catching radiance. The coloration is silver-gray. This lot belongs in an advanced numismatic cabinet as heads and shoulders above the many survivors being offered in today's market. The CAC census is currently 17 pieces with only two finer. The CDN CAC guide is $8,600 as reference. This lot is worthy of the reserve and will be a highlight of a Civil War era collection. Housed in PCGS Gen 4.6 (2013-2014) holder with CAC approval. The label reads CSA Scott Restrike.

1861 CSA Restrike, NGC MS61, W-13 Bisected Date Obverse, Choice Original. A second offering from the 500 Confederate reverse die restrikes created about 1879 by J.W. Scott who obtained the original rusted Confederate half dollar die via coin dealer Ebenezer Mason Jr. Most important is that the 1861 dated host coin is easily attributed as a New Orleans struck W-13 die pairing given the bold vertical die crack through the left side of the 6 digit. W-13 is well known as the Bisected Date obverse. This example is toned a moderate coin gray with the reverse providing steely reflectance under a bright light. There are no surface issues of any consequence with only a well-hidden line on the reverse under CONFEDE(RATE). The reverse strike is bold overall with noted edge weakness in the legend from 10:00 - 12:00. A choice example with rare obverse diagnostics that allow the validation that the host coin was indeed a New Orleans issued strike. Housed in new large font NGC holder with B-8002 as the die variety attribution.

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1861 CSA Restrike, PCGS AU55, Choice Original. One of the 500 Confederate reverse die restrikes created about 1879 by J.W. Scott who obtained the original rusted Confederate half dollar die via coin dealer Ebenezer Mason Jr. The host coins are believed to be 1861 New Orleans business strikes with the reverses planed off prior to being restruck. Since the obverse of the host coin was placed on a board when the reverse was struck, the obverses will be found flattened to varying degrees which must be taken into consideration. This strictly original example is covered with a crusty brownish-gray patina on the reverse with incremental embedded aquamarine shades on the obverse. Under a bright light, the original steely reflectance of the host coin is visible through the toning along with incremental golden hues. Numismatic literature suggests that 100 to 150 survivors are current extant. Worthy of a GFRC-Choice quality rating for its unquestionable originality and unabraded surfaces. An important piece of Civil War numismatics for an advanced cabinet. Housed in PCGS Gen 5.0 (2015) Dupont hologram holder. The label documents this lot as CSA Restrike.

1861-O Union Issue W-1 50C, PCGS AU50, Rare Union Die Pairing, Original. The 1861-O half dollar is perhaps the most popular of all Seated coins, with a groundbreaking marketing effort accompanying the recovery of thousands of pieces from the SS Republic. Randy Wiley capably documented the 15 die marriages for this issue in Gobrecht Journals #94 and #97 (November 2005 and November 2006) and identified the coining authority for each die marriage. As a result, die variety attributes for those struck under the Union, the State of Louisiana, and the Confederacy now render this date as the most popular die variety series within Seated coinage. This W-1 example, a rare die marriage, is a Union-coined piece, identified by the horizontal tine extending from the flag of 1, and a polished die are at the junction of the left facing wing. Residual steely luster remains under angled lighting along with light wear on the highest points. A cluster of lines below the right facing arm are noted, as well as softness in the eagle's left leg and claw. As reference per the Sales Archive, GFRC sold an NGC AU50 example during April 2019 for $2250. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.0 (2015-2020) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-01 USA Issue.

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1861-O Union Issue W-1 50C, PCGS EF40 CAC, Rare Union Die Pairing, Choice Original. A crusty original Union struck example of the rare W-1 die pairing. Steely surfaces are apparent under the thick original skin when viewed under a bright light. A well-preserved example with minimally abraded surfaces given the time in circulation. The W-1 attribution is easily validated via the polished-out feathers at the junction of the left facing wing. As reference from the GFRC Sales Archives, two CAC approved VF35 examples were sold during the past year at $2059 and $1500. This notable lot is therefore well worth the reserve price. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-01 USA Issue.

1861-O Union Issue W-2 50C, PCGS MS62, Very Rare Union Die Pairing, Condition Census, Choice Original. Undoubtedly the rarest 1861 New Orleans circulation strike issued by any of the three administrations: Union, State of Louisiana, and Confederate States of America. This is the finest of only three W-2 Union strikes handled by GFRC in over a decade of operation. A beautifully frosted example with brilliant radiance and vibrant cartwheels under angled lighting. Both sides are consistently toned with light golden hues. Eye appeal is well above average. This die pairing has been validated based on a die crack through STAT(ES OF A)MERICA and the corresponding obverse date position. This is a well-preserved specimen with several scattered field ticks and a light bag mark under the cap, none of which are consequential. An additional comment about rarity is in order. In Bill Bugert's Liberty Seated New Orleans Half Dollar Registry Part 2, the W-1 die pairing is assigned an R6 rarity rating and placed ahead of the W-2 at R5 rarity. My experience has been opposite as demonstrated in the GFRC Sales Archive with the W-1 Union issue appearing at a 6:1 ratio with the much rarer W-2. As reference from the GFRC Sales Archive, a PCGS AU58 example sold at auction during January 2022 for $4750. This lot is expected to easily reach the five figures given the condition census grade and overall eye appeal. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-20) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-02 USA Issue.

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1861-O Louisiana Issue W-3 50C, PCGS EF45 CAC, Choice Original. A marvelous W-3 die pairing example struck under the administration of the State of Louisiana during early February 1861. Fields are partially mirrored with a semi-transparent olive-gray patina that is consistent on both sides. The W-3 pairing can be validated by a tine to the left of 1 in the date, and a mintmark punched high and to the left. Six of the fifteen varieties for this year were coined under Louisiana authority. As reference from the GFRC Sales Archive, multiple examples of this pairing have sold in the lower AU grades in the $700-800 range. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-03 LA Issue.

1861-O Louisiana Issue W-4 50C, PCGS VF35 CAC, Choice Original. The Louisiana W-4 die marriage sees a fresh Obverse 2 paired with the same reverse die employed for W-3 strikes. The reverse die develops die cracks at the legend with those at ST(ATES) being the primary diagnostic along with confirmation by the obverse date position and weakness at Liberty's foot and base. This CAC approved example offers brilliant steely fields and pleasing reflectivity under a bright light. Mottled copper-rose and gold are intermixed on both sides. Surfaces are essentially unabraded and far better than one would expect from a larger silver piece that spent time in circulation. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-04 LA Issue.

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1861-O Louisiana Issue W-5 50C, PCGS AU58 CAC, Very Scarce Louisiana Die Pairing, Gem Original. This Louisiana W-5 die pairing example is highly desirable for two reasons. First is the GFRC-Gem quality rating as the bright light eye appeal is truly compelling. Second is the scarcity of the die marriage as reported by Wiley and Bugert along with my own assessment via the Sales Archive with only three pieces handled since 2014. This is a marvelous example with steely fields and crusty toning on the obverse while the reverse is much more transparent to the underlying luster. When viewed under a bright light, the spinning reverse cartwheels are enticing as is the rose and aquamarine coloration. The PCGS attribution is accurate with a bold die arcing die crack through the base along with two small diagonal lines in the upper right shield being easily seen with a 10x. Yes, the images leave much to be desired as this lot proved difficult to photograph. Please rest assured that the Gem rating is warranted, and the winning bidder will be more than satisfied upon the lot's arrival. The CAC census currently stands at 47 with 5 in the AU58 grade. The CDN CAC guide is $1,620 for reference. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-05 LA Issue.

1861-O Louisiana Issue W-6 50C, PCGS AU53, Scarce Die Pairing, Near-Choice Original. The Louisiana W-6 die pairing consists of a new obverse die paired with Reverse D that was previously part of the W-5 die marriage. This is another scarce variety with GFRC handling only two examples, the last being in 2018. The primary attribution points, on this lot, is a dot defect on AME(R)ICA with the two diagonal lines in the upper shield still being visible. Other than the date position, the obverse has no other pickup points. Soft frosted luster is noted with faint gold hues under a bright light. Residual mint frost is evident in the protected areas. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-06 LA Issue.

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1861-O Louisiana Issue W-7 50C, PCGS AU58, Choice Original. Steely-frosted luster and peripheral copper-gold toning are the highlights of this attractive Louisiana W-7 lot. The die pairing is considered common, while the eye appeal is superb. Some light rub is seen in the fields and consistent with the certified grade. The strike is complete with bold center motifs. This is a later die state example with a die crack at the top of AMER(ICA). Housed in a PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-07 LA Issue.

1861-O Louisiana Issue W-8 50C, PCGS MS62, Choice Original. A historically important Louisiana Administration W-8 strike that occurred during the waning days of the New Orleans Mint circa 1861. Satiny radiance is noted on the obverse since this die is substantially eroded at this point while the reverse luster falls into the steely realm. The lower portion of the obverse is more heavily toned and is not transparent to the underlying luster. This lot is a poster child for the W-8 die marriage with all Bugert listed diagnostics being readily evident. The date punch and underlying denticles are heavily eroded at this point. On the reverse, the die cracks at STAT(ES Of) are easily seen along with those that AMERI(CA). The heavy die clash in the reverse shield is also bold. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-08 LA Issue.

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1861-O CSA Issue W-9 50C, PCGS MS61, Market Acceptable. The W-9 die pairing brings this auction event to the initial New Orleans strikes under the administration of the Confederate States of America. Brilliant metallic luster and spinning cartwheels explode under a bright light with a drizzle of gold toning on the obverse. The overall strike is impressive though there is weakness in the lower right field stars. All Bugert W-9 diagnostics are easily verified with a 10x. Chatter is seen in the right obverse field while the luster appears to be enhanced as it is too brilliant to be strictly original. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-09 CSA Issue.

1861-O CSA Issue W-10 50C, PCGS AU53 CAC, Very Scarce Die Pairing, Choice Original. Of the seven CSA die pairings, W-10 is the most challenging of the group though easily cherrypicked via reverse diagnostics. Obverse 3 exhibits considerable die erosion below the date while the reverse features a bold halo around the eagle. On this lot, steely fields are noted with light gray toning including golden highlights at the legend and some embedded blues on the reverse. A check of the GFRC Sales Archive reveals this lot to be the finest offered, by a wide margin, since keeping sales records. Astute collectors should be prepared for aggressive bidding as this offering could be among the finest known. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as W-10 CSA Issue.

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1861-O CSA Obverse W-11 50C, PCGS MS60, Late Die State, Choice Original. Our consignor could not have selected a more attractive example to fill in the late die state W-11 slot in his comprehensive 1861-O die pairing collection. The die crack from the rim to Liberty's nose is bold and proceeds down to the lower neck. Granular frosted luster is notable under a bright light with the obverse nicely framed by peripheral copper-gold and aquamarine shades. Strike is typical of the issue with weakness in the right stars. The certified MS60 grade is atypical for Seated coinage in the current numismatic landscape. A 10x review of the surfaces revealed a few scattered ticks on Liberty's belly and random micro lines in the fields. These are of no viewing consequence as the luster and obverse toning is predominant. Your cataloger has seen his share of later die state CSA Obverse examples during his tenure with most having one surface issue or another. This is certainly a premium example that belongs in another advanced cabinet. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as CSA Obverse FS-401 WB-102.

1861-O CSA Obverse W11 50C, PCGS EF40 CAC, Early Die State, Gem Original. The GFRC cataloging of a complete set of 1861-O die pairings arrives at an early die state CSA Obverse or W-11. The W-11 pairing results in progressive obverse die states. Early die states can be attributed by a bold tine above the flag of the 1 digit as is the case for this superb example. Later die states will exhibit the presence of a die crack from the rim to Liberty's nose. The latest die states sees that crack proceeding to the chest and in between the breast. During a later die state, the obverse was paired in a screw press with the freshly engraved Confederate States of America with only four pieces struck. Let's get back to this early die state example. Under a bright light, the fields are lightly mirrored on both sides with notable reflectance at the offered grade. Toning is a brownish gray with some embedded olive hues and the prevalence of deep blues on the reverse. The obverse strike is typical while the reverse is complete. A few random lines are seen in the right obverse field under the toning. The PCGS grading appears to be conservative as I grade this lot a full EF45. This lot is a stellar early die state W-11 and warrants aggressive bidding given the GFRC-Gem quality rating. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.1 (2020-2024) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as CSA Obv. FS-401 WB-102 EDS.

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1861-O CSA Issue W-13 WB-103 50C, PCGS AU58 CAC, Bisected Date, Choice Original. While cataloging this special 1861-O Seated half dollar die variety collection, it has become apparent that most of the New Orleans mint output, regardless of oversight administration, have a steely surface finish. There are some slight variations into the partially mirrored and steely-frosted realms but otherwise providing a consistent luster presentation. Such is again the case for this W-13 Bisected Date lot that is so close to full Mint State. Olive-gray crust is consistent on both sides while bright light inspection confirms the steely fields and reflectivity. The bisecting crack is clear with 10x. The obverse strike is weak in general. A popular CSA die variety that is in constant demand. Housed in PCGS Gen 5.0 (2015) Dupont hologram holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as Bisected Date WB-103.

1861-O CSA Issue W-14 WB-103/104 50C, PCGS AU55, Very Scarce Die Pairing, Bisected Date/Speared olive Bud, Choice Original. We arrived to the CSA W-14 die pairing which is yet another very scarce variety in the New Orleans mint early 1861 production history. W-14 is a combination of the "bisected obverse" paired with a fresh reverse that has two parallel lines through the upper olive bud. This anomaly was cleverly named the "speared olive bud". Housed in PCGS Gen 6.0 (2015-2020) holder. Our consignor's specimen is a nicely original mid-grade AU55 example with steely-frosted surfaces. Light coin gray patina is a bit deeper on the reverse. Surfaces are essentially unabraded while the strike is typical with lower right stars lacking center points. Housed in a PCGS Gen 6.0 holder with the label documenting the die variety attribution as WB-103/WB-104 Bisected Date/Speared Olive Bud

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1861-O CSA Issue W-15 WB-104 50C, PCGS UNC Details, Damaged, Speared Olive Bud, Original. Don't let the PCGS holder opinion dampen your enthusiasm for this 1861-O W15 lot, more commonly known as the "speared olive bud". This lot is original with granular frosted luster on both sides. The spinning cartwheels are nicely vibrant under angled lighting with no indication of "damage" in the visual presentation. A long ago quick dip is possible as the surface are mostly untoned with a hints of gold on the obverse and rose on the reverse. So where is the damage? There are two well-hidden lines above "OF" on the upper reverse through the denticles. The lower reverse has a rose tone with a toning break area to the right of the mintmark and extending into the arrowheads. The GFRC reverse image illustrates this well. The opening reserve has been priced to reflect the PCGS opinion while the coin itself is still quite pleasing. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.0 (2015-2020) holder. The label documents the die variety attribution as Speared Olive Bud WB-104.

1861-O CSA Issue W15 WB-104 50C, PCGS VF35 CAC, Speared olive Bud, Choice Original. The final offering from a complete 1861-O die variety collection is a choice original coin gray W-15 or the "speared olive bud". GFRC images accurately capture the circulated surfaces that are naturally toned. The strike is typical for the issue. Housed in PCGS Gen 6.0 (2015-2020) holder with CAC approval. The label documents the die variety attribution as Speared Olive Bud WB-104.